

Message Text

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43

ACTION EUR-25

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E.O. 11652: N/A

TAGS: PGOV YO

SUBJ: DRAFT FEDERAL LAW ON FOREIGN INFORMATION ACTIVITIES

1. PRESS REPORTS THAT FEDERAL ASSEMBLY IS EXPECTED ADOPT NEW LAW REGULATING FOREIGN INFORMATION ACTIVITIES BY END OF MONTH. LAW DESCRIBED AS CONTAINING REGULATIONS ON OPERATION OF FOREIGN INFORMATION INSTITUTIONS, FOREIGN PRESS BUREAUS AND REPRESENTATIVES OF FOREIGN MEDIA. FOREIGN CORRESPONDENTS CAN DESPATCH REPORTS ON EVENTS WHICH OCCUR IN YUGOSLAVIA BUT ARE NOT PERMITTED TO SEND COLLECTED INFO TO YUGOSLAV CITIZENS OR ORGANIZATIONS AND MAY NOT CONDUCT FACT OR OPINION POLLS. LAW ALSO PROVIDES FOR BANNING OF FOREIGN PRESS IF CONTESTS FOUND IN VIOLATION OF YUGOSLAV LAWS (E.G., INSULTS TO PRESIDENT OR OTHER HIGH OFFICIALS, THREATS TO PEACE, DISTORTED OR ALARMING NEWS, ETC.), AND IMPORTATION OF BADGES, SLIDES AND OTHER OBJECTS IN VIOLATION OF "NORMS" OF LAW.

2. SOME FOREIGN JOURNALISTS ARE CONCERNED THAT LAW WILL RESULT IN RESTRICTION OF THEIR NORMAL ACTIVITIES. DELEGATION OF CORRESPONDENTS CALLED AT FEDERAL COMMISSION FOR INFORMATION JULY 19 TO SEEK CLARIFICATION. THEY WERE PARTICULARLY CONCERNED ABOUT ANTI-POLLING PROVISION WHICH THEY

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INTERPRETED AS PROHIBITING THEM FROM ASKING YUGOSLAV FOR

REACTIONS TO NEWS EVENTS. UPI'S WATERS TOLD EMBOFF THAT GROUP WAS ASSURED THAT LAW DOES NOT INTRODUCE NEW RESTRICTIONS CHANGING PAST OPERATING PRACTICES OF FOREIGN CORRESPONDENTS.

3. WE HAVE BEEN SEEKING TO DETERMINE HOW LAW WILL AFFECT USIS ACTIVITIES. FOREIGN SECRETARIAT PRESS SPOKESMAN (ZUPAN) TOLD PAO THAT NEW LAW WILL STIFFEN PENALTIES FOR YUGOSLAVS WHO DIVULGE INFORMATION. THIS SQUARES WITH OUT UNDERSTANDING THAT NEW LAW PRIMARILY INTENDED TO TIGHTEN UP ENFORCEMENT OF PROVISIONS ALREADY IN EXISTING LAW BY GOING AFTER YUGOSLAV HALF OF DIALOGUES, BUT ALLOWING FOREIGNERS TO CONTINUE PRESENT ACTIVITIES. NONETHELESS, USIS INFORMATION OFFICERS AND FOREIGN JOURNALISTS CAN EXPECT CLOSER SCRUTINY OF ACTIVITIES TO ENSURE COMPLIANCE WITH NEW LAW, RELUCTANCE OF YUGOSLAVS TO RISK PENALTIES FOR BEING OVERLY FORTHCOMING WITH FOREIGN INFORMATION REPS WILL CERTAINLY BE AT EXPENSE OF CANDOR.
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